

CH-250
St. John's Chapel Cemetery
Pomonkey vic.
Private

est. 1824

Located three tenths of a mile south of Livingston Road on the west side of Bumpy Oak Road, St. John's Chapel Cemetery is a small religious burying ground established in 1824 by the local Episcopal congregation. The cemetery contains approximately 150 to 200 graves, marked with carved headstones. Adorned by numerous mature oak trees, this picturesque cemetery occupies a 1.4-acre lot that once incorporated a frame chapel built in 1842. The current St. John's church has been relocated approximately one half mile northeast on the south east side of Livingston Road (see CH-251). The congregation continues to use the former cemetery as its burial ground.

St. John's Chapel Cemetery is an important site both for the local religious community as well as for its association with the Civil War. The site of the first Episcopal church established in the Pomonkey/Indian Head vicinity, the cemetery was also occupied by Union troops on and off throughout the Civil War. Established in 1824, the St. John's Chapel congregation erected a permanent church building on this site in 1842. After 1901, when the church was moved, the plot continued to serve as the Episcopal burial ground. Several locally prominent individuals and a handful of Confederate Civil War veterans are buried here.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH-250

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name St. John's Chapel Cemetery

common/other name _____

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number N/A not for publication _____
city or town Pomonkey vicinity X state Maryland code MD
county Charles code 017 zip code 20646

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

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4. National Park Service Certification N/A

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

X private
_____ public-local
_____ public-State
_____ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_____ building(s)
_____ district
X site
_____ structure
_____ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes _____ Name of Listing _____

No X

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>FUNERARY</u>	Sub: <u>Cemetery</u>
<u>RELIGIOUS</u>	<u>Church</u>
<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>Camp</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>FUNERARY</u>	Sub: <u>Cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

roof N/A

walls N/A

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☒ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION

ARCHAEOLOGY

MILITARY/Civil War Camp

Period of Significance 1824 - 1901
1901 - present

Significant Dates 1824, 1842
1901
1966

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brown, Jack D., et al. *Charles County, Maryland, A History*. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

A Guide to Historic Episcopal Churches of Southern Maryland, 1634-1984. Unpublished booklet available at Charles County Community College, Southern Maryland Studies Center, (1984?).

Interview with Louise J. Highby, Pomonkey, Maryland, December 9, 1998.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. *The History of Charles County, Maryland*. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 1.408 acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The cemetery on the west side of Bumpy Oak Road, just south of the intersection of Bumpy Oak and Livingston roads is designated as Parcel 216 on Map 12, Grid 23 on the Charles County Property Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

St. John's Chapel Cemetery has been associated with Parcel 216, Map 12 since its establishment in 1834.

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11. Form Prepared By=====
name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian
organization Charles County Planning Dept. date Nov. 25, 1998
street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646
=====

12. Property Owner

=====
name St. John's Parish Chapel Cemetery c/o William E. Highby
street & number Route 2, Box 2258 telephone 301-375-8306
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646
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MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

Section 7 Page 1

St. John's Chapel Cemetery
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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Located three tenths of a mile south of Livingston Road on the west side of Bumpy Oak Road, St. John's Chapel Cemetery is a small religious burying ground established in 1824 by the local Episcopal congregation. The cemetery contains approximately 150 to 250 graves, marked with carved headstones. Adorned by numerous mature oak trees, the picturesque cemetery occupies a 1.4-acre lot that once incorporated a frame chapel built in 1842. The current St. John's church has been relocated approximately one half mile northeast on the south east side of Livingston Road (see CH-251). The congregation continues to use the former cemetery as its burial ground.

A wood fence encloses the cemetery which is entered through a stone and metal gate located at its northern edge. The graves are aligned in loose rows, and in clumps among the mature trees. Most of the graves are modestly marked by simple headstones, although a few are adorned by taller monuments of obelisk design. The remnants of a dirt road bisecting the cemetery terminates at the site of the former church building in the southwest corner of the property. The original church site is marked by granite blocks that are set where the corners of the former building were located.

A historic photograph of the original 1842 frame chapel shows that it was a 1-story frame structure clad in wood weatherboard and covered by a front gable wood shingled roof.¹ The chapel's flanks were lined with pointed arch windows and its facade adorned by a double-leaf, pointed arch door.

¹ Photograph in the possession of Louise Highby of Pomonkey, Maryland.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

Section 8 Page 1

St. John's Chapel Cemetery
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====

St. John's Chapel Cemetery is an important site both for the local religious community as well as for its association with the Civil War. The site of the first Episcopal church established in the Pomonkey/Indian Head vicinity, the cemetery was also occupied by Union troops on and off throughout the Civil War. Established in 1824, the St. John's Chapel congregation erected a permanent church building on this site in 1842. After 1901, when the church was moved, the plot continued to serve as the Episcopal burial ground. Several locally prominent individuals and a handful of Confederate Civil War veterans are buried here.

St. John's Chapel, Pomonkey was established in 1824 as a mission of Christ Church, St. John's Parish, Accokeek in Prince George's County. Prior to the erection of a permanent chapel on the present cemetery site, the congregation worshiped in several log structures that burned before they could be dedicated. A permanent frame chapel was dedicated by Bishop Whittingham of Maryland in 1842.² The earliest grave site located in the cemetery dates to 1843. The grave belongs to George Dement who died September 25, 1843.

The new church was built in the community of Pomonkey, long a crossroads of trade and transportation. By the mid-19th century Pomonkey had become a commercial center with several merchants, a livery, granary, and blacksmith shop. Prior to the Civil War, the frame St. John's Chapel served as the local schoolhouse in Pomonkey.³

In 1861, Union troops chose Pomonkey as its first occupation site in southern Maryland. The 3rd Indiana Cavalry under Colonel Starr established a camp at Pomonkey in 1861. St. John's church and churchyard were utilized as the camp's headquarters with the church serving as an officers' stable. The church's interior furnishings were removed at this time.

After the Civil War, the church was minimally repaired, and continued in use along with the burial ground. However, after the

² *A Guide to Historic Episcopal Churches of Southern Maryland, 1634-1984*, Unpublished booklet available at Charles County Community College, Southern Maryland Studies Center, (1984?).

³ Interview with Louise J. Highby, Pomonkey, Maryland, December 9, 1998.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

Section 8 Page 2

St. John's Chapel Cemetery
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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opening of the U.S. Naval powder factory at Indian Head in 1890, and the subsequent abandonment of many of the nearby residences, the congregation was convinced that a new church was needed to serve the growing Indian Head population. In addition, the old church was deteriorated, needing substantial repairs. Therefore, St. James Episcopal Church, Indian Head was established in the early 1900s, and St. John's Chapel was moved to a new church building erected a short distance to the north in 1901.⁴

Among the locally prominent families represented at St. John's Chapel Cemetery are the Dements, the Comptons, the Hardys, Brawners, Boykins, Bryans and Coxes. Sergeant Thomas G. Warren of the 9th Virginia Cavalry who died in 1867 is one of several Confederate Veterans buried at St. John's cemetery. An elaborate monument-style headstone marks the grave of Mary Ann McPherson (1809-1901), a premier craftswoman known for her exceptional quilts, and celebrated in several books on the history of quilt making in the United States.

The property on which the cemetery stands was not formally transferred to the church until 1989 when the mistake was discovered. Originally a part of the "Dent's Levels" patent made to Captain George Dent in 1725, the church parcel was likely donated to the church by one of Dent's descendants (see Dent's Levels, CH-70). The property has since passed through many hands, but the ownership issue went unresolved until 1989, when the owners, Louise Jameson Highby and William Penn Jameson, Jr., finally transferred the 1.4-acre cemetery parcel to the church.

⁴ The former 1842 frame chapel has had a long and varied life since its dismantling in the early 1900s. At that time, the building was moved to Raymond Avenue in Indian Head on five freight wagons and occupied by the new St. James Episcopal church. Later, the St. James congregation traded the building with the local Baptist congregation for a new church site. When the Baptist congregation outgrew the old church, they sold it to the Church of the Nazarene. Eventually, the Nazarenes erected a new house of worship, selling the 1842 frame church to a private citizen who moved it to a lot on Mattingly Avenue, now adjacent to St. Mary Star of the Sea Church. The old church has since been renovated for use as a residence.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

St. John's Chapel Cemetery
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition,
1815-1870
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-
1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

RELIGION
MILITARY

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: Site

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function (s): RELIGIOUS/Church
FUNERARY/Cemetery

Known Design Source: Unknown

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-250

St. John's Chapel Cemetery
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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Chain of Title:

August 14, 1947:

Charles H. & Antoinette B. Smith of
Pomonkey to The Southern Maryland
National Bank, La Plata, and Louise
J. Highby of Hyattsville, MD, and
Elinore H. & William Penn Jameson,
Jr. of Pomonkey
Mortgage release
Charles County Land Records
Liber 85 Folio 453

March 4, 1989:

Louise J. Highby, William Penn
Jameson, Jr. & Elinore H. Jameson
Deakyne to St. John's Parish Chapel
Cemetery, Pomonkey/Accoceek
\$0
Parcel "B"- "he cemetery lot" as
described in plat entitled "Parcels
A & B, Land of Louise J. Highby, et
al." (Plat Book 36, Folio 42)
1.408 acres
Charles County Land Records
Liber 1368 Folio 268

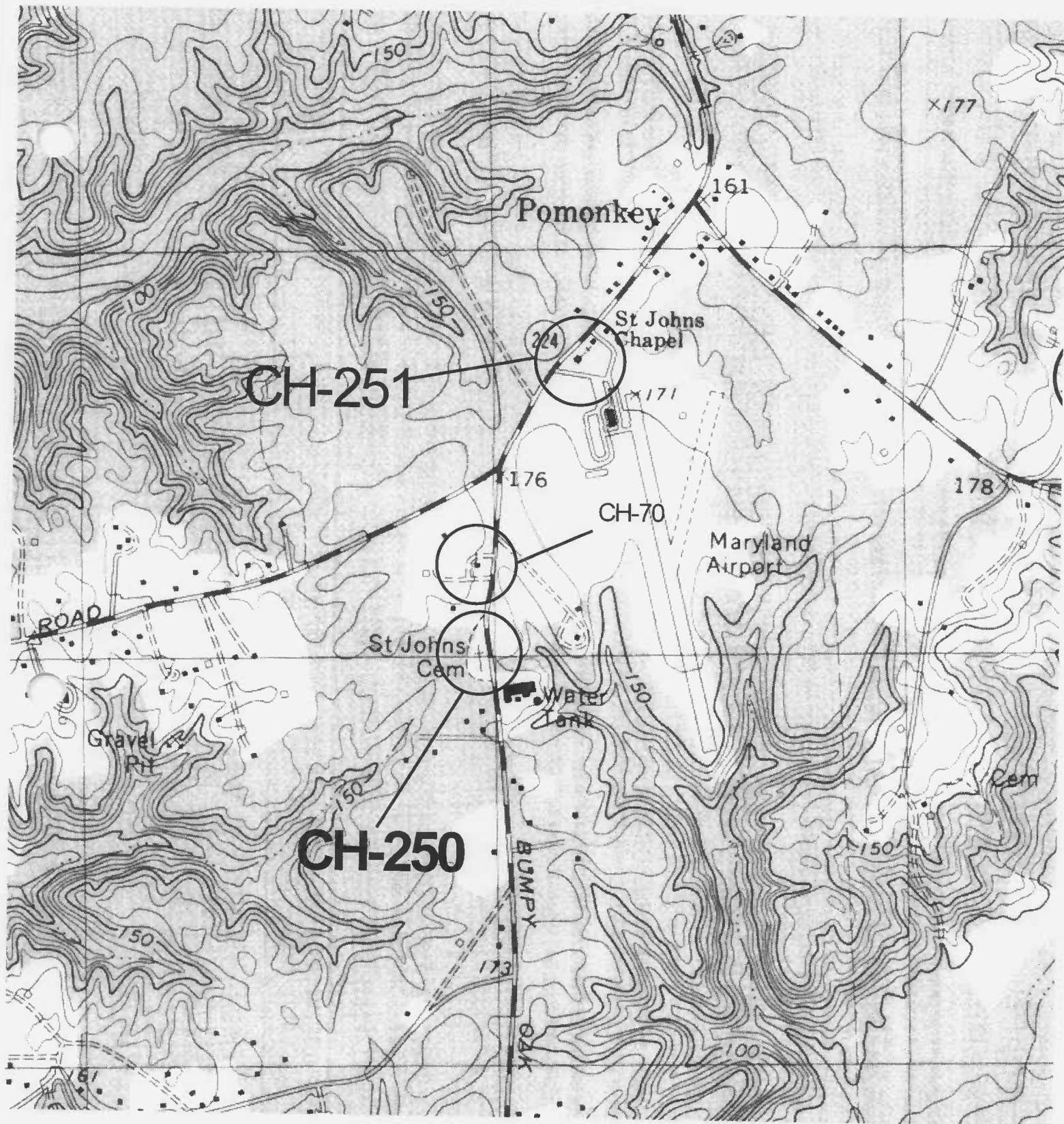
RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

10/98 [K.G. SMITH]

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL CEMETERY
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
Bumpy Oak Rd. / Pomomkey vic.
wooded

CH-250





St. John's Chapel Cemetery
Charles County, MD

CH-250

PORT TOBACCO, MD QUAD



CH-250

ST. JOHNS CHAPEL CEMETERY
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH

10/98

MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING SW FROM CEMETERY ENTRANCE

1 OF 2



CH-250

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL CEMETERY
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

10/98

MARYLAND SHPO

ROBEY FAMILY SECTION - LOOKING WEST

2 OF 2